wednesday/thursday • 28/29 august 2002 • issue sixteen

piss clear

Black Rock City's favorite alternative newspaper

We built this city

A kinder, gentler DPW builds Black Rock City

photo by Adrian Roberts

Burning Man's snarky reality check, since 1995

Piss Clear

wednesday/thursday 28/29 august 2002 issue sixteen

Great Circle at Mainmast (2900') Center Camp, Black Rock City, NV

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generously printed by **Waller Press, 339 Harbor Way, South San Francisco, California, www.wallerpress.com**

e-mail **pissclear@blue-period.com**

web **www.blue-period.com/pissclear**

snail mail ***Piss Clear*, 1550 California St. #344, San Francisco, CA 94109**

On the cover: Ada Chester, Flynn Mauthe, and Will Roger at the DPW work ranch in July 2002.

Piss Clear is printed on 100% recycled paper using soy-based inks.

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BRC: the world's coolest gated community

Adrian Roberts

adrian's rant

Last year, we scored in the Black Rock City real estate department. Our offices were located on the outside of Center Camp, right in the middle of the Esplanade – basically, the playa equivalent of beachfront property. We couldn't have asked for better placement.

This year, while we're still technically in Center Camp, we're behind the Artery, facing into the city. And we have to admit, we miss the view of the playa from last year. Basically, we feel like we've been demoted.

If you help organize a theme camp, chances are, you have similar issues as well. Waiting to find out where Harley placed your theme camp feels sort of like waiting to find out if you got a good part in the school play, or if you made the team. And if you didn't get a good spot this year, you're probably thinking, "What did we do wrong?"

Is *Piss Clear* simply not a big enough operation to warrant prime Esplanade placement? Maybe. I mean, we try to be as low-maintenance as we can with this here newspaper thing. And, like most businesses this past year, we've experienced downsizing – although in our case, that's actually turned out to be a good thing.

Less campmates = less drama

Our core staff is the smallest it's been since our first year of publication. We've found that camping with less people means less drama, critical for people like us who are fighting a print deadline every other day.

Plus, we have a history. The four of us have been doing this a long time. Hell, this is my tenth year at Burning Man. Ten years! I can't believe I've been coming here for this long!

Stewart McKenzie (left), our assistant editor, used to be the editor of the *Black Rock Gazette* back in the day, before they had their own air-conditioned trailer. We wooed him away to the 'dark side' in '96, after he spent the previous year stuck in a Gerlach hotel room fighting with a laser printer. His partner, **Lois Layne** (right), has been our 'Distribution Dick' since '98, delivering the goods and coordinating paper routes with our fabulous volunteer paperboys and papergirls – who, by the way, rock my world! Thank you so much for delivering *Piss Clear!*

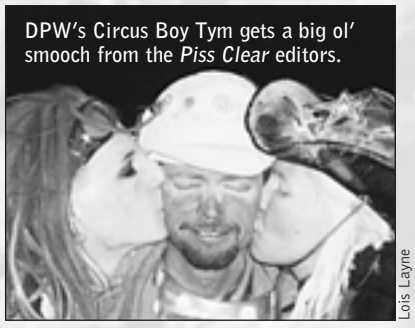
Mysterious D (left), is the (wink, wink) "assistant to the editor," as well as the compiler of our soon-to-be-annual 'Best of Black Rock City' issue, which hits the playa on Friday. She's been out scouting the city for the best theme camps, the best mobile bars, the best, well... everything!

Hard liquor = hard currency

Actually, I think the only reason D volunteered for the job was to work press privilege and get free drinks. Then again, that might be the reason we all do *Piss Clear!* That, and giving back to the community, of course. Consider *Piss Clear* our contribution to the Black Rock City gift economy.

Oh yes, that whole "gift economy" thing. Who doesn't like receiving a gift? Well, us, for one – especially if it's something we don't even want. Most gifts are simply landfill fodder. Do we really want *more* useless trinkets and stickers? Look, there's really only one kind of gift *Piss Clear* likes, and that's booze.

Yes, in the absence of cash out here on the playa, hard liquor equals hard currency. And if you appreciate all the hard work we put in to bring you *Piss Clear,* we'll gladly accept alcohol as a thank you gift!



DPW's Circus Boy Tym gets a big ol' smooch from the *Piss Clear* editors.

Lois Layne

We ♥ the DPW!

You know who else you should thank, especially with some good booze? The under-appreciated Black Rock City Department of Public Works. These tough desert rats have been out here for months, busting their collective asses in the hot sun, all in an effort to create a city for *you* to come and live in for a week.

We feel that the DPW has never truly gotten the props it deserves. We're attempting to remedy that with this issue's cover story, an in-depth interview with Will Roger, Flynn Mauthe, and Ada Chester, three of the core DPW crew who help make Black Rock City happen.

We visited the DPW work ranch this past Independence Day weekend, where – in addition to doing an interview – we also drank beer, shot guns, and lit fireworks with a flamethrower. Believe us when we say these people know how to party as hard as they work. It was definitely the best 4th of July *I* ever had.

Obviously, we love the DPW, so it upsets us when we hear people slagging them off as attitudinal snobs. In our opinion, the DPW's 'tude is richly deserved. If you don't think so, camp out here in the harsh desert for three or four months. One week at Burning Man is nothing. There's a good reason this is the least-populated area in the United States. It's 10 below zero in the winter and 110° in the summer – *in the shade*. And there's practically no spring or fall. *That's* why Gerlach has five bars and no churches.

So if you see a DPW worker throwing some attitude, cut 'em some slack. During our interview with the DPW, Dispatch Manager Frank Dometrovich, aka Spinner, stopped by and offered this insight as to why the DPW gets such a bad rap: "When everyone first sees us," he explains, "we're at our absolute worst possible point. We're finalizing everything with the city, we've been out here for months, and we're burnt out. We *look* like the desert. We're all playafied."

Think about how dirty and dusty you are already – and you've only been out here for two days. Now multiply that by thirty times. Exactly.

So mad props to the DPW! We hope you enjoy this issue of *Piss Clear*. See you out on the playa!

Enter the Playa Iron Liver Contest!

Don't forget, *Piss Clear*'s **Playa Iron Liver Contest** is this **Thursday, between 2 PM and 5 PM.** Bring your best cocktail and drink recipe to our offices at Great Circle and Mainmast (2900'), right behind the Artery.

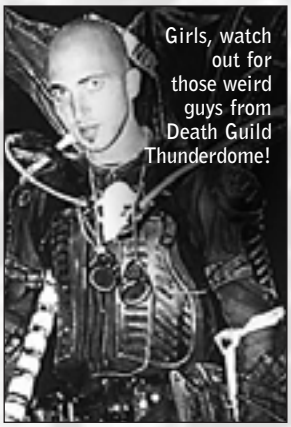
Out on the town *by KATIE KITTY*

advice

Like, wow! Welcome to Burning Man and stuff! I'm Katie Kitty and in my "straight" life, I'm an administrative assistant at Pinch, Polk, and Prober in Los Angeles. I heard about the Burning Man festival in 2000 and I've been coming every year since. Let me tell you, it's so much better now that the dot-commers are all gone 'cause they were all totally superficial and stuff.

Black Rock City has botox parties!

I know, can you believe it? Me neither. My frown lines and crows feet absolutely make me want to puke! I've heard naysayers and "doctors" saying that injecting botulism into your face is dangerous, but all I can say is, anything that makes me look good has got to be okay. A paralyzed face later in live would be a drag, but by then they'll have some other miracle cure!



Girls, watch out for those weird guys from Death Guild Thunderdome!

My sources tell me that you should bring something to Botox Camp to "barter." (wink, wink, giggle, giggle) For sure! I'm all about a healthy and clean lifestyle. And with all the drugs and debauchery at Burning Man that I've sometimes seen through the window of my RV, it's nice to have an alternative for people who care about their bodies and want to stay looking good! I'm so there! Let's party, girls!

Costumes that are cool this year!

Let's face it, we're hot chicks. I mean, really. We care about our bodies and we care about how we look. Working out rocks! I'm so there on the Stairmaster.

Therefore, you should show off what you got sister and put on some funky costumes and boogie down! It's Burning Man!

I brought my fairy wings this year. They're in style, especially when worn with a tiny g-string and a nice pullover graffiti shirt, or a retro-preppy button up. And don't forget the body glitter, you'll look absolutely out of this world in the crazy lights. Just make sure you've got lots of lotion to clean and moisturize later. Show off what you've got, girls! Less is more!

And thanks to our boys in that country where they're fighting the evil-doers, military chic is in! Think short camo shorts with a beret. If you had a dad or grandpa who was in one of those World Wars, try to find a medal from their remains and wear it with pride, baby! You can be stylish *and* patriotic! We're at war and war is hell, but that shouldn't keep you from looking swell. Support our boys, girls! I'm so there!

Make the scene!

Burning Man is all about being seen. If you look good – and I know you do – then don't be afraid to promenade. With all the pretty art around, every few feet is a photo opportunity. Just think how jealous your (yawn) boring girlfriends will be when you meet at the mall and show them photos of you atop a huge penis that someone just put out there on the playa! While they were spending their late summer vacation vacationing in the Alps again, you were being daring and alternative instead. Maybe you'll even get your picture on one of those many Burning Man websites. Wouldn't that be cool?

Finding your special Burning Man hottie

Okay, I'm gonna be honest with you. There are guys at Burning Man who are scary and gross. You'll know them when you see them. Maintain your charm always girls. Remember where you are – in the desert with a bunch of crazy, post-apocalyptic people. Did I just say that? Giggle giggle!

Anyway, my advice is to stay away from the moody "artist" types. They're usually kind of grubby and poor, unless you can find a hunk who's a sculptor or something. The guys who work on the robots and/or play with fire are really weird, so avoid them unless you're drunk and you're looking for a weird, gasoline-smelling quickie. Yours truly got really drunk once and "hung out" with a guy from the Death Guild Thunderdome. So sue me!! I've got stories to tell my grandchildren!

I AM ALTERNATIVE.

If you're looking for a stud monster, you'll see them. They'll be walking around with their tanned hairless chests, drinking beer, wearing baseball hats on backwards, and they'll let you know who they are. When you hear their great "Woo-hoo!", they're nearby. Find one who lives near you in the "straight" life so you can hook up after the festival. Besides dancing all night at the raves, there's nothing crazier than hooking up with some cutie. Don't be afraid girls. Just do the usual and make sure:

- They don't slip anything into your drink.
- You get their real name and location where they're camped.
- You're somewhere where people can hear you scream if he gets too "rowdy."
- And be sure to bring condoms and practice safe sex if you take the plunge. Boys will be boys!

Good luck, girls! Hugs to you all and remember, Katie Kitty hearts you! I'm so there! C-ya on the playa!

This article excerpted from the **Yahoo Education Project** pamphlet. The YEP team hands out these educational pamphlets to any suspicious yahoos on the loose. Stop by the original Light Brite camp for a copy or check out Center Camp and various porta-potties around the playa.

Top Ten on the Playa

by LADYBEE

Rosin Coven – San Francisco's premiere Pagan Lounge ensemble perform in Trashastan on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at dusk, in the Café on Saturday night after the Burn, and at the Duck on Sunday night after the Temple of Joy burn. Do catch at least one performance or try www.rosincoven.com at home.

Filthy Rich Camp – These nutty L.A. divas break the bank at their exclusive gated theme camp, where furs are *de riguer* and members are swimming in cash. Be prepared to purchase playa art installations as their auctioneers cordon them off with velvet ropes and sell to the highest bidder. It's easy to support the gift economy when you're filthy rich!

The Temple of Joy – Once again, David Best and his crew bring us the eighth wonder of the world, made from recycled dinosaur kit parts. This year's structure is a temple dedicated to the giving of gifts. It contains a hanging light fixture made of recycled blue glass.

The Lily Pond – Jeremy Lutes and the Sun Brothers created a field of light-intelligent copper lily pads. It responds to your presence by making ripples of light that spread across the ground as you walk through the pond, creating the illusion of walking on water. Glass koi and wire dragonflies also respond to your presence.

Anas Volcanus aka **the Duck** – Is that a giant rubber ducky out in the Unknown World? I can say no more.

La Contessa and **Ark of the Nereids** – Two enormous sailing ships cruise our "waters," staffed by aerialists, singers, dancers, and musicians. You can be the starboard star if so inclined. The hold of the Extra Action Marching Bands' *Contessa* contains the Soiled Dove, a nightclub run by women. Pepé Ozan's *Ark* features throat singers and Balinese monkey chanters.

Leviathan – Radiant Atmospheres do what they do best, with light and lots of it. A giant orb forms the body of this creature and radiates beams of colored light. Its tentacles will enclose you, and if you venture near, a surprise awaits.

Sea Naturally – I love the idea of this gigantic Aeolian harp with its piano wire strings stretched 19 feet high across the playa, played by the winds. Find it in the Unknown World.

The Bubble or **H20 02** – Swiss artist Myk Henry brings back his enormous bubble, which will be inflated out in the Unknown World. It will occasionally be let loose to roll slowly across the playa like a big rolling drop of water. Youcan even enter the inflated bubble. Weird.

Fool's Ark by **Dadara** – This fanciful boat has travelled across the sea from a river festival in Amsterdam, and has come to rest on Lake Lahontan. On board, you might be lucky enough to be given a colored treasure map by the artist.

Burn your schedule

by MALDEROR

I don't want to rain on any Newbie parades here, but you know all that stuff on the web about getting your event scheduled? The maps they give you at the gate that tell you where all the cool camps are? The detailed calendar of events that lists every cocktail party, fashion show, and lame-ass opera rehearsal?

Nobody reads that nonsense.

Steve Fritz

Once you've come out here two or three years running (or eleven) you'll grow accustomed to what's called "playa time." You'll soon realize nothing ever starts on time or on schedule. Having a print-out of city-wide events is pure folly. Take all that paperwork, on which somebody worked long and hard in order to "give this event more structure," and toss it into the nearest burn barrel.

last rants

If something really cool is going to happen – say, the burning of the Temple of Joy – you'll hear about it in plenty of time, without having to have a detailed calendar of events downloaded to your PDA. All the other hooey, like Camp Earthfart's panel discussion on "Why Litter is Bad," you can probably skip without ruining your Playa Experience. Or, more importantly, without walking halfway across the playa to find out the event organizer is off getting Jiffy Lubed.

And anything truly worth seeing, like, say, a serious windstorm, will happen at some random unpredictable time anyway. All the best things out here happen at no particular set time, so having reams of paperwork to consult just leaves an awful lot of useless Trace. You're going to be walking along, and a flying carpet with a full bar will hover past and take you out for the best night of your Burn. And it won't be because you read about it in advance.

At the risk of not sounding jaded enough, if you let the Burn happen to you, you will be rewarded. If you try to map out every waking moment of the week, you probably love bureaucracy way too much, and need to let go a little. Or a lot.

Sex on the playa

by REV. BLIND TOASTER

Listen up you wankers. Of course there is sex happening on the playa. At times it seems like a seething cauldron of hormonal soup. But did you really spend hundreds of dollars and months of planning just to try that tired dog-in-heat routine that you use at the clubs the other 51 weeks of the year? Go back to your tent and do it the way only *you* can do best – release a little of that pent-up tension and come back out and act like a decent human being. Acting like a decent human being *might* actually get you laid.

Though many of the hormonal-impaired take "free expression" to mean "free sex," you are fucking up the vibe of the playa by releasing your libido on an unsuspecting population. Can't you take this somewhere else? The internet is already a pulsating boil of sex and pornography. If that's all you're looking for here, go home, insert a free AOL disk, lean back in your chair, and spank it till it bleeds. For you sexoholics, stay away from Burning Man in the future. There are so many other things to experience here besides sex, but if you do...

Adrian Roberts

Most lubricants will not withstand playa dust.

Few people are whom or what they appear to be.

Voyeurism is not spectating – *if* it gets you off.

Just because someone gives you a condom doesn't mean they want to have sex with you – they just don't want you to breed.

Everyone has a camera or a video camera. If you don't want to end up on the internet, stay in your tent.

Hitting on people in line for the porta-pottys hardly ever works, but saying, "Hey, wanna come over to my air conditioned RV to take a shit?" might.